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Fourth session

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Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 4 October 1993, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mrs. BADRAN

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

GENERAL DISCUSSION ON "PROTECTION OF THE CHILD AGAINST ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION" (agenda item 11) (continued)

1. Mr. FRANÇAIS (United Nations Development Programme) introduced a film dealing with a joint project by UNDP, the International Labour Organisation and the United Nations Children's Fund on behalf of child scavengers at the garbage dump known as "Smokey Mountain" in Manila. He said that the underlying idea was that instead of trying to prevent children from working, steps should be taken to protect their health and offer them alternatives through education. All economic exploitation, including the exploitation of children, could be attributed to poverty. UNDP's approach in dealing with critical poverty was one of empowerment of the poor, involving people in their own development, rather than simply working for income generation or redistribution.

2. The film entitled "The Philippines - The Other Volcano" was projected.

3. Mrs. BRUCE (International Catholic Child Bureau), speaking as the convenor of the Non-Governmental Organization Sub-Group on the Sexual Exploitation of Women, drew attention to the need for more precise terminology and categorization in the area of the sexual exploitation of children. Research was needed on the organized and unorganized sector, occasional and regular prostitution, the linkage between prostitution and child labour in certain industries and with street children and sexual abuse in the family. Although sexual tourism was a widespread phenomenon and included a growing number of Asian tourists seeking younger girls for prostitution in South-East Asia, it had emerged that most abusers were not tourists but people from all walks of life and all social classes. The typical paedophile was a middle-aged man of middle-class background often working in a position of trust. Child pornography was a growing industry worldwide and there were as yet no concerted efforts to address the problem.

4. She then read out a joint statement by the NGO Sub-Group, which urged the Committee on the Rights of the Child to take the United Nations Programme of Action on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography into account in its dealings with States parties to the Convention and to use it as the basis for a list of measures to be taken immediately to eradicate child prostitution and pornography. States needed to be made aware that sexual exploitation was not only a gross violation of the rights of the child but was also considered to be a contemporary form of slavery. Some of the Sub-Group's special concerns were that: the client and the organizer should be as much a focus of concern for States parties as the child and that the child should be considered as the victim and not the perpetrator; top priority should be given to police training and consciousness-raising; gender discrimination should be eliminated from school curricula; prevention programmes should be introduced in the community, in the media and in schools; and tourism development policies should be scrutinized.

5. A resolution adopted by the International Council of Psychologists on sexual slavery and its impact on the child's mental health was to be circulated for adoption by other NGOs.

6. An important Asian-based initiative that had led to productive South-North cooperation was the End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT) campaign. The INTERPOL Standing Working Party on Offences against Minors was being approached by European-based ECPAT support groups with a view to improving international police collaboration in that area.

7. The statement concluded by recommending to the Committee on the Rights of the Child that it should urge the World Bank, UNDP, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Tourism Organization and other relevant bodies to gather available information and develop a clear strategy for tackling the problem of the sexual exploitation of children, to place that issue on their agenda and to report back to the Committee. It should also continue to urge regional governmental bodies to place the issue of the international and national sale of and trafficking in children on their agenda. The Sub-Group further recommended to the Committee that it should propose the establishment of a mechanism within the United Nations system, with which NGOs would be associated, to coordinate international efforts in the area in question and to offer technical assistance to States parties. In addition, the Committee should cooperate with and request information from INTERPOL.

8. The Sub-Group recommended that States parties should make the fight against sexual exploitation a priority, both at the level of legislation and law enforcement and at the level of concrete social and community programmes.

9. Mrs. CROVARA (International Catholic Child Bureau) drew attention to the link between domestic work and sexual exploitation. Studies in Latin America had shown that sexual abuse of domestic workers by employers was extremely widespread and often encouraged by the media, which portrayed domestics as promiscuous. Two approaches were adopted in dealing with the problem: organizing domestics to be aware of and demand their legal rights or improving their skills and professionalizing the industry. However, neither was a satisfactory long-term solution.

10. Another problem was that of children working in their own homes. Girls in particular tended to be kept away from school to help out with daily tasks. They frequently had to endure family violence and sexual abuse and sought refuge on the streets or in domestic work. Although such girls might engage in sex for survival, they did not willingly give themselves up to prostitution. They often tried to return home but a stay on the streets meant stigmatization and the cycle of marginalization was perpetuated.

11. A striking characteristic of young girls who were sexually exploited was their resilience and zest for life under the most appalling conditions. Many of them fell victim to drugs, AIDS, leprosy or other diseases. They endured successive pregnancies and sometimes imprisonment and their self-esteem was often so low that they felt they did not deserve a better life than prostitution. However, ICCB was convinced that change was possible and that their behaviour was merely a strategy for survival in an extreme situation. It therefore gave priority to the networking of programmes in order to break the isolation of sexually exploited children and to build regional and world

strategies to combat powerful international child prostitution circuits. It also promoted debate in society to reveal the causes of and the contradictions inherent in the use of children as sexual partners.

12. Drug abuse, self-mutilation, interpersonal violence, early pregnancy and a negative self-image were all factors conducive to resistance to change among children and unwillingness on the part of governmental and non-governmental groups to take action on their behalf. Existing programmes were still at the finetuning stage and reached very few children. An effective strategy would have to involve creating substitutes for problem behaviour, understanding and working with the meaning of sex for the children concerned, building a trusting relationship conducive to mutual respect, teaching them to value their bodies, offering them security, involving families and the community, enabling them to learn other skills and training personnel for the programmes.

13. ICCB proposed that the Committee on the Rights of the Child should urge States parties to the Convention and United Nations agencies to give greater attention to children undergoing sexual exploitation. States parties should also be urged to improve law enforcement, to investigate those implicated in the sex market, including the police, and to prosecute the customers of child prostitution. Relevant training facilities should be provided for doctors, nurses, police officers, teachers, lawyers and judges.

14. Priority should be given to preventive action, especially at community and grass-roots level, on behalf of girls in high-risk situations. Non-sexist educational models should be developed.

15. The Committee on the Rights of the Child should urge States parties to develop facilities such as refuges, drop-in centres, group homes and schools for high-risk children. Strictly clinical methods of care and imprisonment were to be avoided. Programmes should include peer promotion of children undergoing sexual exploitation, strengthening of cultural values to help children build resilience through their cultural background and contact with their peers, exploration of old and new forms of income-generation in marginal suburban areas and rural areas, and community-based action to promote women's and children's rights.

16. States parties should cooperate with other Governments and NGOs in training personnel and evaluating programmes aimed at protecting the rights of children, particularly girls and adolescents in high-risk situations, and of women.

17. Educational programmes dealing with reproductive health in the family unit, family violence, abuse within the family and sex education should be directed to the population at large through the mass media. Such programmes would help to reinstate the family as a place where emotional attachments served as basic moral references.

18. States parties should be urged to include the rights of the child in school curricula at all levels of education and to make teachers more aware of issues relating to the protection of children.

19. Lastly, States parties should discourage the use of derogatory language with respect to children's sexual behaviour, revise national legislation to deal effectively with procurers and legal facilitators for child prostitution and examine ways in which child-rearing tended to reaffirm the predominant male culture.

20. Mr. BONNET (United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery) said that the Board of Trustees on which he served considered the exploitation of children to be a form of slavery, and consequently followed the work of the Committee with great interest. The Board's Chairman had recently been arrested and imprisoned during a peaceful march to promote human rights in India and although India's Supreme Court, meeting in extraordinary session, had ordered his immediate release, the incident served as a reminder that the defence of children was a dangerous struggle for those leading the movement. In analysing and evaluating the exploitation of children and the degree of protection they enjoyed, the Committee should take into account the risks incurred by and the persecution of those, including the NGOs, who led that struggle, as well as the need to ensure greater protection for the activists who had the courage to denounce publicly any violations of children's rights and to tell the truth in international forums about the present-day reality.

21. Mr. ZACHARIEV (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that UNESCO was involved in a variety of activities related to children and child exploitation, some of which coincided with the Committee's own areas of interest. An intersectoral project which focused on young children within the family addressed many of the problems with which the Committee was concerned. Among its objectives were the promotion of knowledge and awareness throughout the world of the development of the child and the dissemination of that knowledge at the national and international levels through the Interchild network. Within that framework, studies were carried out into child behaviour and practical information was compiled and distributed, including information on the responsibilities of the State and the social structures relating to children.

22. Most of UNESCO's activities were carried out in partnership with other agencies. It was currently responsible for coordinating activities by a number of international organizations in the context of a programme on education, nutrition and health, whose main objectives were to improve knowledge on the rights of the child and to promote international standards for children through instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

23. UNESCO worked through educational and information programmes rather than in practical areas. Education was the focal point of all its activities, both formal and informal, through which it sought to identify children's problems and appropriate solutions. In addition to being involved in the dissemination of information on the rights of the child, UNESCO was active in the wider context of human rights and the implementation, not only of the rights established in international instruments, but also of national standards. To that end, it ran programmes aimed at the prevention of child abuse and the implementation of children's rights for the benefit of the millions of refugees and displaced persons throughout the world, half of whom were

children. As part of its activities in creating an awareness of the problems and of the existence of international instruments intended to protect children and their rights, UNESCO had published an illustrated booklet on the Convention in conjunction with the French Ministry of Social Affairs aimed at 6 to 10 year olds.

24. UNESCO was also involved in extensive correspondence about the Convention as well as the translation of information on children, including the Convention, into the less common languages, together with publications on children's rights and child exploitation in partnership with the NGOs. It was also launching a series of new studies on the implementation of the Convention to supplement the efforts of other organizations. UNESCO also organized meetings to promote children's rights; for example, an international congress in Montreal in March 1993 had attempted to establish parameters for human rights education and democracy and had adopted an international plan of action to distribute the relevant information.

25. Mr. HUSSAIN (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) said that the agricultural sector was possibly the largest employer of child labour both on a formal and informal basis, particularly among the subsistence farmers of the developing world. In that connection, FAO supported UNICEF's call for a flexible school calendar which would enable school holidays to be arranged around the peak periods of employment, such as harvesting and planting, so that children could help support their families, with only a minor disruption of their education.

26. Agriculture was a strenuous and demanding activity in which children were expected to do the work of adults at a time when their energy was needed for growth. Employment in agriculture might even be said to be responsible for their lack of growth. Even where families were aware of a child's nutritional needs, those needs tended to be ignored, particularly in poor areas. It was particularly important therefore to educate parents in matters of nutrition and other physical needs of the child.

27. Mgr. BAMBAREN GASTELUMENDI said that although many reasons had been put forward for child exploitation, they had not included the family factor as such despite the fact that it was closely intertwined with the problem of child labour.

28. In that connection, he supported calls for new legislation to control the various forms of exploitation and to prevent the possibility of new forms developing, and for the tightening of legislation on child prostitution and pornography.

29. Whether children were exploited by an individual or whether they were forced on to the streets by hunger, abandonment or break-up of the family, their situation was the result of poverty, exacerbated by present-day economic structures. It was essential, therefore, that the attention of the international financial institutions should be drawn to the responsibility they bore in imposing programmes on developing countries which imposed cuts in social and other programmes, and left millions destitute.

30. In endeavouring to bring about the necessary policy changes, public opinion and public pressure could be used to great effect. The media in particular could be a powerful ally provided that they were encouraged to take up specific issues. The NGOs were also important, as were UNESCO and the ILO, whose education programmes involving street children were already producing results. In conclusion tribute should be paid to the children who considered it an honour to work for and contribute to their families' survival.

31. Mr. SIWAKOTI (International Institute for Human Rights, Environment and Development (INHURED)) said that the economic exploitation of children was deeply rooted in the existing socio-economic structure of contemporary society and in the export-oriented market economy. Many States parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child had failed to undertake effective legislative, judicial, administrative and other measures to end the economic exploitation of children and had also failed to fulfil their reporting obligations. Child labour, bondage and similar forms of exploitation had become rampant in recent years.

32. Alarming evidence of the economic exploitation of children all over the world, especially in developing countries, had proved the existence of a direct link with the policies of international financial institutions and the industrialized countries. The policies and conditions imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, including structural adjustment, export-oriented development schemes, privatization, liberalization and deregulation were responsible for an increase in violations of children's civil, political, economic and cultural rights and the right to development. Mounting unemployment, poverty, hunger and cutbacks in health, education, housing and social services were eroding the quality of life of the majority of children. As people organized to protest against those policies, militarization and repression intensified. The international financial institutions, controlled by the rich industrial nations, had replaced the colonial Powers as the dominant global economic force. That was also the general conclusion of a public hearing organized in Vienna during the recent World Conference on Human Rights on the impact of the policies of the international financial institutions.

33. The situation had worsened as a result of global economic recession and rapid technological change. Unless the international economic system was restructured to meet human needs, the situation of poor children would inevitably worsen and their economic exploitation would continue to grow. Greater income disparities and greater concentration of power and wealth in the hands of the transnational corporations would further erode the quality of life of children.

34. The economic exploitation of children could be expected to worsen unless the following measures were undertaken by Governments and international organizations, including the United Nations: (1) The cancellation of the external debt and restructuring of existing economic models to meet the economic and human needs of children and their families, particularly in developing countries; (2) the reorientation of output to meet domestic needs, including food and other basic essentials, rather than to produce for export; (3) the restructuring of national and international economic and trade relations based on justice, cooperation, solidarity, including redistribution

of income, land, resources and productive assets; (4) resistance to undemocratic and inappropriate economic and development models which exploited children economically; (5) the institution of genuine democracy and popular participation in the political and economic spheres at community, national and international levels, and (6) drastic reductions in military expenditure and an end of the arms trade, with the diversion of military budgets to human development.

35. In view of the need for concerted action to minimize and abolish the economic exploitation of children, his organization called upon the Committee to: (1) undertake a thorough study of the impact on children of the policies of States parties, international financial institutions, transnational corporations and donor countries; (2) take steps to receive complaints from individuals and groups concerning violation of children's rights, including their economic exploitation; (3) have its mandate expanded to hold transnational corporations accountable for the economic exploitation of children; (4) develop indicators to measure the violation of the economic, social and cultural rights of children and their exploitation; (5) maintain a database on violations of children's rights and the exploitation of children and ensure resources for visits to the field; and (6) ensure effective monitoring of States parties' compliance with reporting obligations and implementation of the Committee's recommendations, addressing in particular the economic exploitation of the child.

36. Mrs. FANELLI (RPD, Fourth World) urged that caution should be exercised in order to ensure that legislation was not used against the victims of exploitation, who were the most vulnerable groups. It was equally important to look closely at the activities being initiated by international organizations and non-governmental organizations and the long-term consequences of such actions. Programmes and interventions must be evaluated in terms of their effect on the poorest groups and activities must be implemented in such a way as to draw on the positive aspects offered by the family unit and community. It was also important to offer to families, particularly mothers, with children still too young to work an opening which would enable them to believe in change for the better. School-age children had to be offered the opportunity of learning, even if it was in the streets and not in the form of formal education; the fundamentals of culture might not be of immediate use to them but could provide them with an opening, a means to develop their imagination and thus a possibility for the future. Her organization fully supported the efforts of UNESCO in that respect. Finally, the education of children from other, more fortunate backgrounds must be regarded as a tool with which to build up links of solidarity between them and children from target groups.

37. Mrs. ROBERTS (Anti-Slavery International) observed that governmental structures lacked a single focal point for matters relating to child exploitation; different aspects tended to be dealt with separately by ministries of education, of health and of employment. In most countries, it was the non-governmental organization sector which identified situations of abuse, released children and provided rehabilitation. There was, however, so far no official role for non-governmental organizations in matters involving courts, officials or police. In that context the Committee might recommend

the establishment of national forums to make it possible for all bodies concerned to work together once the reluctance of Governments to identify problems of exploitation had been overcome.

38. The CHAIRPERSON observed that the aspect of cooperation should be taken into account in any study to be carried out on the subject, together with that of the costs to Governments in terms of long-term ill-health and delinquency which would result from neglect of the problem. Such a study would be best carried out by an inter-disciplinary team.

39. Mr. BONNET (United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery) said, in the context of observations made by the Chairperson and preceding speaker, that it might also be useful if major international organizations, particularly the international financial bodies, each had an official responsible for coordinating matters relating to child labour and exploitation. In connection with studies in that area it seemed to him that not enough attention had been paid to what child workers themselves had to say about their working conditions. Such children should have the right to speak out in groups, in an organized manner, in order to prevent the opinions they expressed from being manipulated.

40. The CHAIRPERSON drew attention to the fact that working children were vulnerable to exploitation precisely because they were not organized.

41. Mr. PICARD (International Labour Organisation), referring to the need identified in the course of the discussion for national forums, recalled that encouragement was being given to the establishment of national committees to ensure implementation of the provision of the Convention as a whole. National committees might include, as appropriate, persons concerned with child labour, such as representatives of labour departments and of employers' and workers' organizations. Another very important point was the need to ensure that children were registered at birth and thus had a legal existence, without which a child could not have his or her rights recognized.

42. Mr. GUSSIANOVICH (Movement for Child Workers in Latin America, MANTHOC) drew attention to the importance of children, and child workers in particular, organizing in order to ensure that they had a collective social visibility. In that respect, it was not necessary that the trade union or parliamentary model should be strictly adhered to as a means of organization; indeed children should be allowed to express themselves in a range of different ways, thereby reflecting the heterogeneity of their claims. Without organization there could be no preventive measures through which to improve the situation of child workers.

43. The mere fact of working, however, did not create labour awareness nor did the mere fact of organization create a social identity among child workers. To achieve such awareness and identity, a sustained educational effort was essential, so that out of the often brutal experiences and the situation of poverty of such children there arose an opportunity for them to assert their personal and social identity. Disregard for the conditions of workers and particularly child workers could only have an adverse effect on the self-esteem of the individuals concerned. The proposal that child labour should be abolished because it detracted from education should be weighed

against the reflection that certain types of education might adversely affect children's rights to work. Indeed, the problem of the relationship between education and work in general remained to be solved.

44. The role of children, and in particular child workers, in society could only be promoted if the role of adults in society was challenged; in addition to ethnic, cultural and other divisions, the problem arising from the "adultization" of society which must also be addressed. Brazilian studies had already cast doubt on the premise that child labour was necessarily a factor which perpetuated poverty among generations; in that respect further research should be undertaken to determine whether there was a relationship of cause and effect between child labour and subsequent adult unemployment.

45. Mrs. SANTOS PAIS noted firstly, that, there was a recognition of the importance of education - both generally and addressed specifically to children - to counter all aspects of exploitation of children. Education could develop the potential of each child and provide a child with an opportunity to experience childhood, while at the same time providing the conditions in which a child could be well informed and have free choice in regard to participation in society. The need for the working child to benefit from a flexible system of education had also been recognized. The commitment UNESCO had made to participate in that respect was most valuable.

46. Secondly, the question of how children might join organizations to defend their rights had been brought to the fore and the absence of participation by children in trade unions had been noted. The means to encourage such participation through legal measures and through approaches from trade unions themselves must be considered. Such participation would also mean that adults must address the difficult problem of how to listen more attentively to what children had to say.

47. Thirdly, it had been noted that coordination must be envisaged at both national and international levels. At the national level, national committees on the rights of the child could indeed play a role in coordinating action, gathering information and offering effective protection of the rights of the child, possibly through the provision of free legal aid or the establishment of ombudsmen. At the international level, the Committee was a natural focal point for United Nations bodies active in that field. In that respect she recalled that the World Conference on Human Rights had appealed to all United Nations bodies to review and monitor their policies regularly in relation to the rights of the child. In that context the Committee had certainly a catalytic role to play.

48. Ms. BLOEM (World Federation of Methodist Women), speaking also on behalf of the Non-Governmental Organization Sub-Group on the Sexual Exploitation of Women, agreed with Mrs. Santos Pais on the importance of education, but pointed out that in countries like Estonia or Russia, where the educational level of the population was high, sexual exploitation was still regarded as acceptable; it would therefore be necessary to explore other ways to attack the problem. Gender discrimination persisted, as did the treatment of girl-children as commodities. It was one thing for the Committee to ask States to enforce respect for the rights of the child, and quite another to change ingrained customs and traditions of oppressing children.

49. Mgr. BAMBAREN GASTELUMENDI agreed with the finding set out in the report of the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (E/CN.4/1993/67, para. 149) that the treatment of people as wares for the purpose of consumerism was underscored by the decline in ethics. Children were not to blame for being involved in drug trafficking, pornography or crime: that must be the responsibility of adults. Unfortunately, if a person was caught with a child prostitute, it was the child that was punished.

50. He drew attention on a project under way in his own country, Peru, with a group of 300 street children; he was pleased to report that all those children had returned to school, and 83 per cent of them had gone back to their families. However, it was often the families themselves that were at the source of child abuse.

51. Children were born good. It was the responsibility of adults to ensure that their best interests were taken into account.

52. Ms. MOURAVIEFF (International Federation of Social Workers) said that if change was to be brought about, it was essential for projects to be coordinated with the target group, and in that context she expressed gratitude to Mrs. Roberts. Children did not live in a vacuum; if possible, education and health must be provided for the entire family. That approach should underlie any effort to achieve change in the current lamentable state of affairs. A more holistic attitude must be taken towards education, which needed to be made available before the children were born, or even conceived.

53. Mrs. EUFEMIO agreed with Mgr. Bambaren Gastelumendi and Ms. Mouravieff on the need to strengthen the family. Even within families, power struggles took place unconsciously and there were exploiters and the exploited. When children were mistreated in their families, they subsequently found nothing wrong if they were mistreated by their employers. When families punished their children harshly, they were preparing them for harsh treatment at the workplace. She was not certain whether education or premarital counselling would be enough to change that situation. The family be addressed in the context of economic exploitation. Perhaps social security measures, where appropriate, should be instituted.

54. Ms. TORRES (International Movement for the Apostolate of Children), noting that her organization was present in 53 countries, said that as a social worker who had been involved with street children for 15 years, she had reached the conclusion that education and training were essential to promoting the best interests of the child. Having spent two years in France, she had had an opportunity to learn about the European situation and had come to realize the universal nature of the difficulties facing children and of the overriding need for education and training.

55. Mr. BONNET (United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery) asked the representative of the International Monetary Fund whether that organization had taken up the question of the exploitation of children, and who the Committee might approach at IMF on that subject.

56. Mr. CIRILLO (International Monetary Fund) said that the question of child labour markets and their impact were being given attention in his

organization. Although the question was not one of the prime concerns that IMF had been mandated to examine, he suspected that in the future the issue would arise more often both within his organization and the World Bank. He noted that a number of World Bank world development reports had focused on ways of alleviating poverty. His organization's activities in the area of the exploitation of children had probably not been as great as they ought to be, but he would be reporting back to IMF headquarters and would request the names of persons that the Committee could contact on the question.

57. The CHAIRPERSON welcomed the presence of the representative of IMF, because neither IMF nor the World Bank had been sending representatives to the Committee's sessions. It was to be hoped that the presence of a representative of IMF at the meeting would help heighten the awareness of that organization and lead to concrete action.

58. Mr. CIRILLO (International Monetary Fund) said that he had, in fact, only just contacted IMF headquarters in Washington to draw attention to the session and would also be preparing a lengthy report on the Committee's work.

59. Mr. HAMMARBERG said that in the past, work in the United Nations on human rights and on development had been taken up separately. In the wake of the World Conference on Human Rights, the two issues were seen in the same context. In the long run, it had become clear that economic growth could not be pursued without taking into account its social impact. That realization must spread to the international financial institutions. But those bodies could not alone be blamed, because they depended upon the positions of States. The issue was not simply one of economics, but of values.

60. He saw a risk of a spreading cynicism. There were already numerous shocking reports on the exploitation of child labour in many countries, yet a commitment to combat the problem was still lacking. In some cases, there was an element of racism involved: many of the children were from other ethnic or linguistic groups or minorities, and their plight was therefore regarded as less important. There was a tendency to dehumanize them. He had also observed a class arrogance of sorts in the indifference towards the problem. The mass media were not always helpful in that regard: at the press conference held earlier in the day, the Committee had been asked for exact figures on exploited children, and the media had not been happy when the Committee had not been able to provide them with a list of the worst violators. Such clichés prevented the media from highlighting the true dilemmas involved and thus from breaking through the wall of cynicism not only among Governments but also in the public at large.

61. Mr. BELSEY (World Health Organization) pointed to the unique opportunity presenting itself to coordinate the efforts of the staff of the specialized agencies with the work of non-governmental organizations. The specialized agencies had excellent policies, which the staff were more committed to implementing than the States themselves. An alliance between the staff of the specialized agencies and NGOs might help in taking concrete action and maximizing complementarity. A closer working link was needed between the specialized agencies and the NGOs; a successful example of such coordination had been the activities of the WHO and NGO task force on the question of female genital mutilation.

62. Mr. PICARD (International Labour Organisation) agreed with the previous speaker; the informal meeting in January might provide an opportunity to formalize such working methods.

63. Mrs. ROBERTS (Anti-Slavery International) said she was pleased that the International Monetary Fund had sent a representative, because that indicated that children might be on the agenda of IMF and the World Bank in the future. She was, however, worried about the obvious economic participation of children in certain sectors in many countries, for example in the carpet industry in India or in agriculture in virtually every country, and she was surprised that no figures were available. She had recently read a World Bank discussion document on the economic contribution of children and domestics in one African country, Togo, as she recalled: their economic importance was immense. Yet that document had made no mention of the rights of the child or of access to education. The Committee might wish to try to obtain a copy of that study.

64. Mr. HAMMARBERG thanked all the participants for their oral and written contributions. The Committee was thinking of publishing the day's statements and comments in a document. Any other observations could be submitted in writing. The Committee would try to make a statement later in the week highlighting the main recommendations. It was to be hoped that cooperation would continue.

65. The CHAIRPERSON, summing up, said that the day's discussions had been very fruitful, and many practical suggestions had been made. One issue upon which attention had focused had been the importance of coordination in the widest sense of the term, whether between United Nations agencies, between the Organization and local NGOs or among ministries at national level. Regardless of differences of opinion, there had been general agreement on the need to abolish the exploitation of child labour. But that goal could not be achieved overnight, and therefore both short- and long-term actions were necessary. Mention had been made of the dimension of health care and of efforts to build the self-esteem of children. The question of whether children should be organized in unions had been raised and the role of education highlighted. UNICEF had been urged to coordinate its work with the Committee. She hoped that the welcome presence of a representative of the International Monetary Fund reflected IMF's emerging concern about the issue under discussion and the beginning of its cooperation with the Committee. It would be most useful if the World Bank would also attend the meetings and join the Committee's efforts.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.